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## PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact Public Affairs  
Mike Johns (602) 514-7566

# **FIVE SENTENCED IN IDENTITY THEFT AND SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD CASES**

**PHOENIX, ARIZONA** -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced today that on April 15, 2002, and May 6, 2002, five individuals were sentenced in United States District Court in Phoenix, Arizona for crimes involving identity theft, lying on INS documents, and defrauding Social Security benefits programs of more than \$173,000.00. Three of the cases involved the creation of false identities using false documents and social security numbers.

Sentenced were:

**Sofiane Laimeche**, 32, Phoenix, Arizona was sentenced to three years probation and 100 hours of community service for using a false social security number and bogus identity documents. Laimeche, an Algerian who entered the United States illegally in 1997, purchased false identity documents, including a bogus social security and INS alien registration number, which he used to secure employment. Laimeche later married an American citizen and used her citizenship status to secure a valid visa and work permit.

**Malek Seif**, 33, Djibouti, Djibouti, was sentenced to time served of 170-175 days and ordered to leave the United States within 48 hours. The maximum sentence under the Guidelines was 180 days. Seif had voluntarily returned to Arizona from France after the September 11 attacks, to be interviewed by the

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FBI. Seif was charged with making numerous false statements to the INS, filing a false asylum application, providing false documents to the Social Security Administration, and misuse of social security numbers in Arizona and California.

**Gerald Curtis Delger**, 64, Show Low, Arizona, was sentenced to five years probation with six months to be served in a half-way house, and ordered to pay restitution to the Social Security Administration in the amount of \$48,841.53 for identity theft and for defrauding Social Security programs. Delger stole and used the identity of a former acquaintance to secure credit cards, open bank accounts, and to apply for and collect Social Security disability benefits from 1991 until 1998. While receiving Social Security benefits under his assumed identity, Delger continued to work and receive a salary.

**Adrienne Rocha**, 62, Golden Valley, Arizona, was sentenced to six months home detention and five years probation, and ordered to pay restitution to the Social Security Administration in the amount of \$90,496.00 for defrauding Social Security programs. Rocha, whose mother died in January 1993, continued to receive and convert to her own personal use Social Security Widow's benefits checks paid to her deceased mother's account. Rocha admitted to concealing her mother's death from the Social Security Administration and forging her deceased mother's signature on the Social Security benefits checks each month before depositing the funds into her personal account.

**Tyrone Tolliver**, 43, Phoenix, Arizona, was placed on probation for five years and ordered to pay restitution to the Social Security Administration in the amount of \$6034.00. Tolliver, whose name was on a joint account with his mother, continued to receive and spend for his own personal use Social Security disability benefits deposited into his deceased mother's account. Tolliver admitted to concealing his mother's death from the Social Security Administration and using her ATM card to withdraw the funds for his own personal use.

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The investigations in these cases were conducted by Agents from the Phoenix office of the Social Security Administration/Office of Inspector General, and the FBI, and are the result of a joint effort between the Department of Justice, United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, and the Social Security Administration/Office of the Inspector General and the FBI to prosecute identity theft and fraud against Social Security benefit programs.

The prosecutions were handled by John K. Webb, Special Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

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